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ARTHUR RANSOME : *A History of Story-Telling*.
 London : T. C. and E. C. Jack ; New York :
 F. A. Stokes & Co. 8vo., pp. 312 and Index.

This is a commendable venture into a field still too little cultivated in English. The development of college courses in the Novel has called out several good text-books, but there is no satisfactory work in English as yet upon the history of prose fiction for the general reader. Dunlop's work, even in its revised form, is inadequate, ill-arranged, and very dry. Mr. Ransome does not put forward his book as a history of fiction, but it may well help make a market for a more comprehensive and thorough work. It conveys, apparently, his series of shilling selections from *The World's Story-Tellers*, published by the Messrs. Jack, and seeks merely to give a readable sketch of some of the important aspects of prose fiction, English and French, from the Renaissance to the present day. It is confessedly fragmentary, giving little attention to the realistic branch of the Novel, and it is more than whimsical in the inclusion of the *Roman de la Rose* and the tales of Chaucer among its topics, and the exclusion of *Amadis of Gaul* and other prose romances of chivalry, and of the whole dynasty of seventeenth century French Heroic Romances. But it shows a sympathetic though uneven acquaintance with the earlier periods, and an intelligent familiarity with the nineteenth century Romanticists. Part I, which discusses in chapters of about a dozen pages each *The Roman de la Rose*, *Chaucer and Boccaccio*, *The Rogue Novel*, *The Elizabethans*, *The Pastoral*, *Cervantes*, the essay-fictions of the *Spectator*, and the English realists of the eighteenth century, shows deft selection of matter and suggestive presentation. These sketchy chapters should make the reader curious to know more of the fiction of the early Renaissance, interesting, in spite of its weakness of form, in so many ways. It must be admitted that Mr. Ransome's statements are sometimes inaccurate. Sidney's *Arcadia* is represented (p. 85) as lacking in vigor and robustness. Swinburne's description of the work of Mrs. Aphra Behn as "weltering sewerage" is repeated with approval (pp. 71 and 139), though as applied to her novels the phrase is quite incorrect. Fielding and Smollett

are bracketed together, casually, with strange disregard of perspective (p. 162), as having "failed as dramatists." The estimates, moreover, of several of the leading figures of earlier fiction, Fielding, for example, Defoe, Le Sage, Cervantes, and Sidney, are scarcely adequate ; the backgrounds are good, but the main points do not stand out sufficiently. Part II, which deals with Scott and a few minor English Romanticists, with the two Americans, Hawthorne and Poe, and with French writers from Chateaubriand—who for some reason is included—to De Maupassant, is much better, — more correct in view and better written. Occasional inept or crudely expressed statements like the attribution to Hawthorne of "provincial pedantry" (p. 264), or the assertion (p. 188) that "Before the writing of the Waverley Novels, Romanticism in English narrative had shown itself but a stuttering and one-legged abortion, remarkable only for its extravagance," are easily outweighed by the excellent chapters on Balzac, Gautier, Mérimée, and the note on De Maupassant. In these chapters, as, indeed, throughout the book, Mr. Ransome has caught much of the vivacity, the graphic power, of the French critics of fiction, whom he seems to be imitating. It is to be regretted that he has not always attained the French discretion of phrase. The numerous portrait-sketches by J. Gavin, reinforcing ingeniously the author's estimates of his Story-Tellers, add much to the interest of the book.

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ROMAN WOERNER : *Henrik Ibsen*. Zweiter Band.
 München, 1910. 8vo., v + 384 pp.

This second volume of Woerner's *Ibsen*, like the first which appeared in 1900, happily combines in the historical method of literary criticism with the purely æsthetic. After acquainting us with the necessary facts in connection with the inception and development of each drama, the mood in which it was conceived—as far as such a mood can be reconstructed from letters, speeches, reminiscences, and other sources,

—Woerner interprets in searching and illuminating fashion the artistic value and intellectual import of each work. Nor does W. stop there. For him Ibsen is no isolated phenomenon, but receives form and light and shadow by being presented in company with poets and thinkers, continental and English, antecedent or contemporary, who labored or are still laboring to hold the mirror up to life.

The Introduction gives a bird's-eye view of the development of the dramatist from his early "Norwegian" period when the brooding eye was turned within, through the long activity of the "European" period "when the searchlight was sent forth to glide over society, spreading both light and terror" (p. 4). Most suggestively W. traces the gradual growth in the nineteenth century of the ideal of "characteristic" or realistic drama as opposed to the typical or "classic" (pp. 5 ff.), an ideal which had found champions even among the young Storm and Stress writers of the outgoing eighteenth century, as instanced by young Goethe, and which, in the nineteenth century, was passionately and impetuously upheld by Kleist. The latter, one hundred years ago, died in a desperate struggle for principles which his generation was not yet ripe enough to perceive. Grillparzer (1791–1872), less aggressive, almost bled to death in his desperate struggle to affect a compromise between his inner urge toward the new truth and the force of the old traditions. The indomitable Hebbel (died 1863), so nearly Ibsen's kindred in spirit, was tortured by the conflict between the new ideal and the old into many exaggerations and eccentricities. In Ibsen, however, the new tenet found a young genius almost unhampered by old traditions, and hence came to its consummation in him. Woerner might here have adduced the Austrian poet Anzengruber, who in the seventies wrote dramas strangely like Ibsen's both in style and content (for instance, *Das vierte Gebot*). Very helpful for a realization of Ibsen's peculiar genius is the comparison which W. makes (pp. 20 ff.) of the influence upon the poet by his sojourn in Italy (1864–68) with that which a similar sojourn had made upon Goethe nearly one hundred years earlier. For both it meant a re-birth, but from diametrically opposite points of view: for Goethe

a complete revulsion of his inmost being in accordance with the classical ideals of art; for Ibsen a casting off of all that was not pre-eminently idiosyncratic. Ibsen built up in 1866 what Goethe had torn down in 1786—characteristic art (p. 29).

The dramas, as in vol. I, are treated in chronological order, except that *The League of Youth* (finished in 1869) forms the beginning of this volume as logically being the first of the social dramas, while *Emperor and Galilean* (finished 1873) was treated as the last of the introspective dramas, at the close of vol. I. W.'s method of making each chapter an essay in creative criticism which draws the essence out of an Ibsen play and presents it to the reader in original and trenchant fashion, is extremely grateful to those to whom a flash of illuminating penetration is worth pages of ponderous detail.

Least successful appears to us the treatment of the last four, "the symbolistic," dramas, for which W. has no affinity, while *The Lady from the Sea* also seems underrated. Most successful and attractive are the chapters on *The Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, *Hedda Gabbler*. Here W. is in his element, laying bare Ibsen's inimitable character-development, down to the most delicate, almost imperceptible cells of consciousness. In Nora's case, W. makes a very fine distinction between her great natural and unconscious power of self-abnegation, as shown in her sacrifice for Helmer, and her habitual little egoisms from the conventional point of view. Equally stimulating is his tracing of Helene Alving's slow progress from conventional cowardice to complete anarchy (p. 105), and the almost uncanny vivisection of that "corseted Hjørdis" Hedda Gabbler. Most happy also is the contrast between the moral ideal expressed in *Doll's House* and that of Gellert's *Das Leben der schwedischen Gräfin von G.*, between outward fidelity to the words of a vow and inward fidelity to oneself—as illustrating nineteenth century morality vs. eighteenth century ethics. "Ibsen hat auf ethischem Gebiete die innere Form nachgewiesen, wie Goethe auf ästhetischem" (p. 90).

The chapter on *Ghosts* (pp. 91 ff.) begins most felicitously with a reference to Hebbel's *Vorwort zur Maria Magdalene*, where as early as 1844 H. had demanded for modern life as expressed by

modern art not so much new institutions, as new foundations for the old. *Ghosts* seems like the consummation of this demand; not the abolition of marriage, but a better foundation for it, an inner not an outer motive, is what Ibsen advocates. Nor is this true of this one play alone. The Ibsen drama as a whole represents, as W. well puts it, "ein innerlich notwendiges Schicksal" quite in the spirit of Hebbel (p. 93). Suggestive also is the comparison of *Ghosts* with *Oedipus* (pp. 101 ff.), both tragedies of "belated insight," with many wise and instructive words on parallels and contrasts of these apparently so divergent dramas. But in the discussion of *Ghosts* we miss a reference to Anzengruber's *Das vierte Gebot* in which (in the story of Hedwig Hutterer) marriage is treated from the same point of view, by the use of the same material as in the Ibsen play.

In *Hedda Gabbler* W. sees Ibsen's criticism of his own dearly-beloved Hjørdis ideal, a criticism already begun in *Rosmersholm*. In contrast with those other two painters of Utopias, Rousseau and Nietzsche, Ibsen was constrained to turn the light of criticism upon his own ideals (pp. 235 ff.). This gives to *Hedda Gabbler* that absolute objectivity—"überfaustisch" W. calls it—which makes it enjoyable only to those who are avid for the delineation of life, the real hunters after truth (p. 240).

W.'s comparative method of treatment yields fruit in such illuminating passages as that on pp. 250 f., in which he traces the gradual development in modern literature of the ideal of the comradeship between men and women from the onesided emphasis upon the sex-relation which characterized eighteenth century letters: Schiller's *Thekla* vs. Kleist's *Nathalie* and Ibsen's *Thea*. To Ibsen's almost uncanny penetration into the vagaries and finesses of woman's psyche W. does full justice, often adducing most helpful comparisons with Hebbel's women. But we miss the very obvious one between Aline Solnesz and Rhodope (in Hebbel's *Gyges und sein Ring*) who are so evidently kindred of type and fate. Interesting is W.'s delineation of the fluctuations in Ibsen's estimate of women, as illustrated by the characters of Ingeborg, Nora, Rebecca, Thea, Irene (pp. 338 ff.). In the suggestive discussion of the hatred which the last named

as well as Rita Allmers bears to the man's work, it would have been helpful to speak of Bernard Shaw, whose *Man and Superman* was doubtless largely influenced by *When We Dead Awaken*. Useful also would have been a reference to Maeterlinck's *Sister Beatrice*, who bears much resemblance to Irene.

Scattered throughout the volume are many excellent passages on Ibsen's dramatic technique. Ibsen's affinity with Lessing in finesse of craftsmanship (pp. 112 and 183), which at times becomes meticulous as contrasted with Shakespeare's bold sweep of metaphor (pp. 164 f.), is excellently demonstrated. The influence of Dumas and the other French dramatists of the younger school W. considers far slighter than was formerly believed (pp. 68 f.), but in the *Volksfeind* he sees a tragi-comedy of the *Misanthrope* type (p. 127). In discussing Ibsen's innovations in the dialogue, W. makes a happy reference to Ludwig's *Erbförster* (pp. 71 f.). Almost every chapter contains appreciative and helpful analyses of technical economy: so especially the admirable exposition of the *Volksfeind* (pp. 135 f.), the twofold test applied to Helmer in *Doll's House* (pp. 81 f.), the excellent uses made of dramatic material (pp. 84, 111 f., 183 ff., etc., etc.).

In closing, grateful mention must be made of the clear, lucid and vivid style of this presentation, a style which stamps W. as a representative of that new school of writers who are making of German prose a most supple instrument of expression.

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ON THE NAME "SEIGNIOR PROPSERO."

To the Editors of *Mod. Lang. Notes*.

SIRS:—In the November (1910) number of *Modern Language Notes* Mr. Alfred E. Richards inquires in a note under the heading "Several Verbal Queries," for information concerning a